

Special World Columbian Stamp Expo Issue



The Philatelic Communicator

Quarterly Journal of
Writers Unit 30, American Philatelic Society.

Volume 25, Number 2, Whole Number 96. Second Quarter 1992.

How to Edit a Society Journal

By Ken Lawrence

Publications do three things: They inform, they present opinions, and they entertain.

No rule requires any publication—or any single issue of a publication—to perform all three tasks, but a successful stamp publication usually will do so. An editor who forgoes one or two of these elements, usually for the sake of scholarship and dignity, will invariably produce a higher quality product if he or she does so by design rather than by default.

Every editor should begin with a consideration of those basic duties, and should return to them several times as an issue takes shape. By doing so, he or she will provide readers with continuity from one issue to the next without being rigid or overbearing about it.

This is not just a structural point, although editors should

treat it as though that's the important thing. It also has philosophical value at every editing level, for this reason: No publication can please everyone. The editor who sets the goal of pleasing everyone winds up watering down content to the least common denominator of acceptability. That approach yields a bland, lifeless journal. The editor who aims to please becomes, in effect, a censor,

The opposite is true of the editor who consciously sets out to achieve the full potential of his or her publication. Readers may be indifferent to some portions, or even offended by some, but there will be something of value and interest to nearly everyone, every time.

So that is the place to begin: Inform, opine, and entertain.

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Editing Philatelic Journals

By Charles J. Peterson

There are almost as many philosophies of editing as there are editors. Those philosophies are conditioned by a diversity of factors: the medium and genre with which the editor works, the organizational structure, established standards and precedents, salaried versus volunteer and full-time versus part-time status, expectations.

Certain features however are constant, whether we look at editing a musical score or a television drama or a philatelic journal. There's an author, a message, a medium and an audience. The essence of the editor's job is to get that message to the intended audience with optimum effectiveness, while preserving the integrity of the originator's style. The editor facilitates the process of communication—everything else he or she does is a subset of that primary function.

That, at least, is the central principle I lived under during three years with a small society newsletter, and 15 years as editor of the *Philatelic Literature Review*. It's also been present

►► Editing—page 42.

WCSE Writers' Breakfast

The traditional breakfast of the American Philatelic Society Writers Unit 30 at World Columbian Stamp Expo in Rosemont, Illinois, will begin at 8:30 a.m., Sunday, May 31, 1992, in the Union B Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency O'Hare.

The breakfast is open to all visitors to World Columbian Stamp Expo, and will include drawings of philatelic literature door prizes.

Tickets are available at \$15.00 each, and should be ordered from WU30 secretary-treasurer George Griffenhagen, 2501 Drexel Street, Vienna, VA 22180. Checks payable in U.S. funds should be enclosed, payable to "Writers Unit 30." The deadline for ordering is May 1, 1992. □

STaMpsHOW '92 Breakfast

Another WU30 Breakfast will be held Sunday, August 30, 1992, at the APS's STaMpsHOW '92 in Oakland, California. Tickets should be ordered from the American Philatelic Society, P.O. Box 8000, State College, PA 16803. □

The Philatelic Communicator

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NEXT: Literature Judging

DEADLINES

For receipt of copy by the editor

Third Quarter June 20, 1992

Fourth Quarter ... September 10, 1992

Literature Exhibition Calendar

March 21-22, 1992

Springpex 92, Springfield, Virginia. Information from Stephen J. Shebetich, P.O. Box 544, Springfield, VA 22150.

March 28-29, 1992

Cardinal Spellman Museum 16th Annual Philatelic Literature Fair, Weston, Massachusetts. Information from Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Museum, 235 Wellesley St., Weston, MA 02193.

August 27-30, 1992

STaMpsHOW 92, Oakland, California. Information from American Philatelic Society, P.O. Box 8000, State College, PA 16803.

October 9-11, 1992

Sescal 92, Los Angeles, California. Information from James A. Bowman, 3459 Township, Simi Valley, CA 93063.

October 9-11, 1992

Colopex 1992, Columbus, Ohio. Information from Gary D. Weaver, P.O. Box 1094, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068.

October 30-November 1, 1992

Chicagopex 92, Rosemont, Illinois. Information from Chicagopex 92, P.O. Box A-3953, Chicago, IL 60690-3953.

October 28-November 2, 1992

PhiLITex 92, New York, New York. Information from PhiLITex 92, c/o The Philatelic Foundation, 21 East 40th St., New York, NY 10016.

April 3-4, 1993

Colopex 1993, Columbus, Ohio. Information from Gary D. Weaver, P.O. Box 1094, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068.

August 19-22, 1993

STaMpsHOW 93, Houston, Texas. Information from American Philatelic Society, P.O. Box 8000, State College, PA 16803.

October 8-10, 1993

Sescal 93, Los Angeles, California. Information from James A. Bowman, 3459 Township, Simi Valley, CA 93063.

New Dates for PhiLITex 92—

..... See calendar, above.

The Winner

By Joe F. Frye

In the Fourth Quarter 1991 issue I asked readers to tell me how I could indicate an accurate word count in my "Last Words" piece—*before* the issue was printed.

Ken Lawrence was the only respondent—and correctly stated that I had keyboarded the issue with random digits for the word count, counted the words with the Spell/Word Count feature of *WordPerfect 5.1*, then replaced the random digits with the actual word count. Wise editor! □

President's Message

By Charles J. Peterson

One of the principal benefits of philatelic literature exhibitions (according to some, their only justification) is the exposure of a wide variety of philatelic publications to the public. Unfortunately, we've not been doing very well in that respect. Instead, our literature shows for the most part are sparsely advertised, unrepresentative in participation and inadequately reported. I intend to spend several columns talking about this problem; for now, let's look at the first of those weaknesses.

Try this simple open book test: using the show calendars from the current issues of *The American Philatelist*, *Linn's*, *Mekeel's*, *Stamp Collector*, and *Stamps*, list every event you can find in which a literature class is specifically offered. If you find more than one (Sescal '92, listed in the *AP*), then matters have changed significantly since I wrote this article in February 1992. (If you counted PhilITex '92, by the way, I suggest you look again. The last time I looked, none of the calendar entries actually identified this as a literature exhibition.)

As a result, potential literature exhibitors generally get one press announcement of a given show. If they miss or misplace that release, there's no reminder and no ready source of information. Small wonder that the same exhibitors keep showing up at the same events.

The problem is two-fold. Organizing committees need to make sure their press releases prominently identify the presence of a literature class. Secondly, editors need to include that information in their show listings.

We've taken steps to fix the situation, by sending letters to selected organizing committees and editors. Bill Welch has already initiated a revised show listing form for the *American Philatelist*, with specific entry lines for literature and youth classes. We've also cleaned up our own house; *The Philatelic Communicator*, which was equally guilty of one-time-only announcements, will now feature a calendar of coming events.

But we can't send personal letters to everyone who might decide to organize a literature show, or who might choose to put a show calendar in a society journal. That's the reason for this public message, to sensitize the show organizers and editors in our readership to the situation and ask their help.

In the meantime, here's a listing of recurring literature events (based on experience and personal recollection): Springpex; Colopex; Sescal; Chicagopex; Pipex (occasionally); all APS STAmPsHOWs; all FIP-sponsored world exhibitions; most FIP-sponsored specialized exhibitions (literature pertaining to the specialty); Canada's Royal/Royale national exhibition (literature featured biennially, in odd years); the Cardinal Spellman Museum literature fair (not part of a major stamp show, and not governed by APS judging regulations). If I've missed any, I apologize and I'll welcome your letter of correction—and as an excuse I'll point back to the fact that there's nowhere to find the information! □

Editor's Bulletin Board

By Ken Lawrence

My Prediction: The American Topical Association will bounce back to its former strength, now that our WU30 Secretary-Treasurer, George Griffenhagen, is the new editor of *Topical Time*. Congratulations on the appointment, George!

Attention Literature Exhibition Organizers: I have successfully completed my apprenticeship and am now a certified literature judge.

Composer? Communist? What's the Difference? "To err is Divine," says *Scott Stamp Monthly*. The January 1992 feature said, "Russia itself quickly corrected a wrong death date of American composer William Foster in a 10-kopeck stamp of 1971 (Scott 3915a) with one issued three weeks later showing the correct date (Scott 3915)." Actually, William Z. Foster was chairman of the Communist Party USA.

Stamp Collector's new editor, Ken Palke, was introduced to readers in the February 1 issue as a U.S. Navy veteran, an experienced journalist, and a longtime stamp collector. We wish him every success. Palke applied to join the American Philatelic Society about the same time he took his new job.

Stamp Collector gave the National Intelligence Book Center permission to reprint Steve Esrati's December 29, 1990, article on the USSR stamps featuring Kim Philby and other spies. The trouble is, nobody asked Steve, and he never got a dime for it. (The culprit was the paper's former editor, David Schiller.)

Dane Claussen gave his analysis of circulation figures for the U.S. weekly philatelic press in the January 1992 issue of the International Philatelic Press Club's *Report to Members*.

I was Surprised. Not a single WU30 member wrote in to comment on the journalistic competition for Genoa '92, announced in the First Quarter *PC*, which offers up to 10 million lire in prizes to writers who promote the exhibition in their media to the satisfaction of show organizers.

Barbara Mueller sent a hilarious Mike Royko column from the November 1, 1991, *Chicago Tribune*. "Dos Passos never knew DOS"—Royko's advice to a young admirer on which computer to buy. "Shakespeare didn't worry about how much RAM he had. And Mark Twain didn't feel deprived for lack of a laser-jet printer."

Les Winick sent a clipping from the September 1991 issue of *Gift Reporter*, "Pee-Wee Herman Goods Spawn Cult Collectible Market." Sam Malamud take note: there's a market out there for Pee-Wee stamps from Redonda.

Stamps columnist Jacques C. Schiff Jr. wrote, in the February 1, 1992, issue, "Most people prefer to remain anonymous for reasons of security." Actually, most people like to see their names in the paper. If you think Schiff believes what he wrote, I'd like to discuss a real estate transaction with you.

The Stamp Wholesaler, February 29, 1991, ran publisher Jim Magruder's front-page color spread extolling John Peters and his stamp business. It called Peters "a former president of the American Stamp Dealers Association," but neglected to mention that Peters resigned that post in disgrace in 1985, when he was indicted on mail fraud and conspiracy charges related to the fraud conviction of his colleague, stamp dealer Robert Wurdeman. Wurdeman had bilked collectors using fraudulent Philatelic Foundation certificates prepared by PF computer clerk Alan Kaplan. Peters was found innocent, using as his legal defense that doctoring stamps is a common practice throughout the trade. Magruder's editorial in the same *SW* displayed his gift for unintended irony; in it he defended his policy of accepting ads from crooked dealers.

Glass House Dweller Mark Kellner had a front-page article on the USPS penguin taxonomy fiasco in the February 8 *Stamp Collector*, with nary a whisper crediting *Linn's* for breaking the story. ▶▶

For the Record, that "hopefully" in the first paragraph of my February 24 Linn's topical column wasn't mine.

New Publication 1. Bob de Violini is editing the resurrected quarterly of the Philatelic Computing Study Group, *The Computelists*, that has been dormant for almost two years. Write to PCSG, P.O. Box 5025, Oxnard, CA 93031.

New Publication 2. A newsletter for founders and patrons of the American Philatelic Research Library, *A PeRiodical*, has appeared. Write to APRL, P.O. Box 8000, State College, PA 16803.

New Publication 3. The newsletter of the National Postal Museum of the Smithsonian Institution, *En Route*, is now available. Write to James H. Bruns, Director, National Postal Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560.

Censored. If you think Linn's has been publishing a complete listing of ink-jet postmarks, guess again. True, Linn's covered the Columbus, Ohio, "You Bitch" postmark, after the Associated Press reported it nationwide. But Linn's has not carried the scoop from Frank Shively about the Holland, Ohio, "Testicle Deck 95% or Bust" postmark. Fred Baumann's excuse for neglecting this topical cancel is that he hasn't seen a (second) confirmation copy, but concedes the likelihood that it started out as "Test Deck," "Test Dec[ember]" or some such.

Uncensored. Lily Lewy carries on her late husband Edgar's work with a monthly column in *The Philatelic Exporter*. She objected to some raw language in a book she reviewed, and the author complained to her editor. In her February 1992 column, Mrs. Lewy, as she prefers to be called (she deplores Ms.), let him have it. "To put it even more plainly, sweat, shit, sex, and smut don't mix with stamps. I hope that makes my attitude quite clear?"

Recommended. The single best desk reference for writers is Edward D. Johnson's *Handbook of Good English*. It's back in print, revised and updated. Book of the Month Club's price is \$17.95.

Deadlines. Third Quarter, June 20. Fourth Quarter, September 10. Firm. □

Editing for the Members

By Diana Manchester

One member of my Inflation Study Group delights in cornering me at a stamp show. He gets a glint in his eye and then, with a very belittling tone of voice, proceeds to let me know how poor *Inflation Study Group Bulletin* is. Specifically, the content is beneath the level of a superior philatelist (presumably him).

I am merely reinventing the wheel and rehashing topics that had been discussed 30-plus years ago, he says. He never mentions the little fact that all these articles he is referring to were in German. "Everyone already knows this stuff you're publishing," is the statement that always sums up his "lesson."

My reply is always prefaced with a deep breath and one of my dainty smiles, "Jerk Face (not his real name), I'd be glad to showcase any of your original research in the *ISGB*." My members want the stuff. They ask questions about the stuff. They are so proud when they find out something new (new to them) and they want to share it.

The issues that I receive the most positive responses from are the ones jam-packed with trivia. I have yet to receive an encouraging response for one single article that has been a trend-setter of research information. □

There's No Such Thing As Writers' Block

By Boo Heisey

Stuck? Can't think of a thing to write? There are often times when we can't come up with a single word to put on paper. Some call it writers' block, but I don't believe in that term. I think it's just a time to be doing something instead of writing.

If you think writers' block exists, here are a few tricks to help you break the block that's stumbling your writing and help to loosen the words.

First of all, don't tell yourself the words aren't coming. You know what the power of suggestion can do. Well, you just might believe it and then the words won't come. Instead, tell yourself, it's time to be doing something else—like reading or research or coming up with your next idea.

No writer, no matter how good or prolific, can keep the words coming all the time. Experienced writers just use the slow time for other productive work, and that's what you should be doing.

Writers' block is for writers who don't write, but if you're jotting down ideas and taking notes, isn't that writing? Isn't that working toward your ultimate goal? If you're doing that, then you don't have writers' block and after all the note taking, the scribbling and the brain storming, the words will always come.

One trick that works for me is to have a strict writing schedule I always adhere to. If I can't get the words out during my four hours of writing time, I use those four hours for writing-related work. I'll type letters, send off queries, organize my notes and papers, balance my expenses—anything writing related.

Now, when was the last time you rewarded yourself for writing? Working without a reward can make you not want to write. Sometimes seeing your byline is too far into the future and you'll need some other gratification in the meantime.

If you've just finished a chapter on the postmarks of Murphys, California, have dinner out. The cost of the dinner should be determined by the difficulty of the chapter. If you finish that book you've worked so hard on for six months, treat yourself to something better than a dinner. How about a weekend out of town?

Personally, I feel guilty if I don't write. If you can put yourself on a schedule of writing even 30 minutes every day, or a page a day, then you'll feel guilty on the days you don't write, and feeling guilty will often put you back in that chair where you belong—writing. Just think—writing one page a day will put a book in your hands after a year. Not bad for only a half hour of stolen time a day.

Do you put off your writing to do household chores instead? And because you're not watching TV or goofing off, you don't feel guilty, right? Any sort of work, you tell yourself, is okay.

Well it's not okay. Dusting the venetian blinds, as much as they might need it, or straightening the coffee table, even if there are writing books on it, is not writing. So don't justify working around the house when you should be writing.

Another tip, but one of the most important, is not only to keep paper and pen by your bed, but use it. Many good ideas come just as we're falling asleep. Write them down!

Yes, I know you have to reach for and find the pen and paper, but force yourself each time to do it. Don't attempt the feeble tricks I've tried, like repeating the idea over and over ten times in an effort to remember it in the morning. It doesn't work. And word association doesn't work either.

Keeping a small tape recorder nearby might work for you, but just be sure to turn it on before mumbling into it. It's also a good idea to keep a pocket flashlight handy. It'll keep you from having to get out of bed to turn on the light.

And remember to reward yourself for writing down your ideas. Perhaps letting yourself sleep in for an additional 15 minutes the next morning would be an appropriate treat.

The words do come. They just come when you least expect them, they never come out well when you try to force them, and they always come when you're not trying.

Remember, there's no such thing as writers' block. There are only writers who are blocked by not working and if you're working, you're writing, right? □

U.S. Stamps & Postal History: Some Concerns

By Ken Lawrence

Randy Neil is everywhere known as our hobby's most enthusiastic and self-confident promoter; John Hotchner, as its most tireless worker. If any team can succeed against the odds in establishing a new commercial quarterly magazine for stamp collectors, this one would appear to be the most likely. Surely if they do succeed, that will be a fine thing for writers, even if it causes anguish to their competitors.

But exaggerated boosterism, of which Randy is often guilty, can lead to serious miscalculation, mirage, and self-delusion. Some of that is already evident in the current project. And the downside, if things don't go as they should, is a particularly harsh one for writers. So all of us have an interest in keeping a sober eye on *U.S. Stamps & Postal History*, with a view that looks past the promotional propaganda.

That's not an easy task, because we're examining here a hidden object, a moving target, and a series of claims that are constantly in flux. It is likely that a great deal of what I write today (February 29) will be obsolete even before the *U.S. Stamps & Postal History* advertising deadline of April 20, the promised "spectacular" launch date of May 10, and World Columbian Stamp Expo, the focus of the first issue's full-color cover.

The first question most observers would pose is, why a new magazine?

Randy's letter to prospective advertisers promises "lively reader-involved features, columns, 'how-to-do-its,' facts and news that simply can't be found in the weeklies or narrow-interest journals." All right, show me. Name one such fact or news event that someone tried and failed to get published in a weekly or a society journal. Or has this team of contributors been holding out all these years, just waiting for such an opportunity?

The grumps on the sidelines say that John and Randy decided to put out this magazine after being thwarted in their desire to take over the Bureau Issues Association. I haven't bothered to ask John or Randy to comment on the accusation, because they would surely deny it, and because I have not detected any evidence of mean-spiritedness underlying their efforts.

Besides, if it's true, as Randy wrote in one letter, that he and John have put in "five years of confidential planning" to make the magazine a reality, then the plan to launch the magazine predated any sour-grapes pretext for starting it.

However, it is true that John in particular devoted a great deal of thoughtful consideration to proposing ways that the BIA could reach out more broadly to attract and involve the mainstream of U.S. collectors, but his plan was blocked by an entrenched old-

guard leadership. More recently, the same forces prevented John from becoming BIA chairman. Both John and Randy have remained active participants in the BIA, but with a reduced commitment.

That background makes the lead claim in their January 10 news release inexcusable. It describes *U.S. Stamps & Postal History* as "the first-ever national magazine devoted to the full spectrum of America's own stamps and covers." A January 6 cover letter from Randy made this dubious claim: "For the first time, the U.S. will join with other countries—like France, Germany, England, and Australia—in having a special national magazine devoted, strictly, to the philately of our home country."

Again, show me.

Aside from specialty society publications or magazines subsidized by postal ministries, who publishes a one-country exclusive stamp magazine? Nearly every commercial stamp publication, including those that have existed for some time in this country, emphasize the country's own stamps, but not to the exclusion of all others.

In fact, to the extent that some stamp magazines do have a narrower focus, they tend to be pan-national—such as Scandinavia; or Australasia; or British Empire/Commonwealth; or France and overseas departments, Andorra, and Monaco; or Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein.

I can't believe that *U.S. Stamps & Postal History* has an undisclosed relationship to the U.S. Postal Service, but I'm also not swayed by the ostensible commercial reason for the exclusive focus on U.S., so-called "target marketing" as the pitch to prospective advertisers. The lines in the hobby just aren't drawn that rigidly either among collectors or among dealers.

Next, what is the magazine's goal? At various times Randy has said his aim is to put a stamp magazine back on the newsstands, which is certainly a seductive line to any of us. But the current scheme falls far short of that in many respects.

The word on the street is that Randy has committed \$45,000 to the venture, which is a plausible figure given what else I've been able to discern. That isn't enough money to put a new magazine on newsstands in just one U.S. city. Presumably John and Randy realize that, which would explain why none of the literature for the magazine envisions newsstand distribution.

The announcement to prospective advertisers claims that, simultaneous with the May 10 launch (a companion sheet says, "on May 5"), "over 10,000 hand-picked U.S. collectors, dealers, and stamp clubs (every club in America) will receive copies of *USS&PH* in the mail." They also plan to sell "thousands of copies" for \$1 at World Columbian Stamp Expo, although the cover price is \$4.

They are now guaranteeing a future circulation of no less than 7,500 per issue, up from 5,000 a few weeks ago. The basic display ad rate is \$425 for a full page (7½ by 10 inches), which makes the rate (per square inch per 100 subscribers, calculated according to Gary Van Cott's formula in his excellent new book, *Philatelic Periodicals of the United States and Canada*) much more expensive than all their competitors, even if that were a real circulation (paid or requested), rather than heavily gratis—almost five times higher than *Linn's*.

In short, there's a lot of fanciful planning here that is grounds for skepticism. John and Randy are taking off on a wing and a prayer at a time when well-capitalized target-market magazines with competitive advertising rates are failing in record numbers.

If anyone can succeed this way, John and Randy are the likeliest team, but if they fail, that's no proof than an adequately financed stamp quarterly would be doomed.

Some naive thinking is shown in Randy's letter to prospective advertisers: "Check this: in the first 15 days after announcement of *USS&PH* appeared in the philatelic media, we received more than 2,900 requests for a sample copy! Fact. We are pleasantly shocked at this incredible response."

That response should have been no surprise. Stamp collectors are notorious freeloaders. The problem is, the thousands who write away for free offers are not the ones who buy from dealers. Advertisers want to see a base of paying subscribers. But one thing that muddles this realization is that John and Randy too are freeloaders, expecting that their writers will supply a year's worth of copy without compensation.

Thus, it's misleading when they refer in their literature to a "writing staff" consisting of Barbara R. Mueller, Steven J. Rod, Herman Herst Jr., Dilmond Postlewait, Dane Claussen, Barth Healey, Clyde Jennings, Lowell Newman, Dan Barber, Bill Bauer, Jay Stotts, Karol Weyna, A. Dan Jones, Richard Drews, and many others.

This is what Randy and I have been arguing about. He promises pay after the fourth issue, and dangles the hope that it will be the highest in the business. But he won't obligate himself to pay writers, and that's an insult.

Very few new publications last for four issues. It is customary when someone starts a new publication to pay top dollar for the best available writing. Failing that, offer shares of equity. No one would expect to get by without paying for printing, telephone, postage, and advertising, but they expect writers to work free.

Randy counters that he and John aren't getting paid, but that's nonsense. This isn't a charity, it's a business. If the magazine succeeds, he owns a valuable property. If it fails, he gets a fat tax write-off. The trouble is, most hobby writers are so accustomed to donating their efforts to society publications that they easily fall prey to this kind of guff.

The National Writers Union, of which I am a member, has just launched a campaign against such exploitation of free-lance writers, and for the adoption of a Journalists' Bill of Rights. It's an effective organization; the union helped me collect my \$1,500 fee from one publisher who tried to fold his magazine without paying his writers. For information, write to National Journalists Campaign, National Writers Union, 13 Astor Place, New York, NY 10003.

If John and Randy do succeed, an even larger issue will have to be faced: possible conflict of interest. Both of them are APS officers, and Randy is already running for president in next year's election. As officers, they cast key votes that affect one of their biggest competitors, *The American Philatelist*.

APS by-laws forbid any active stamp dealer from being the organization's president. John Hotchner has gone beyond that, arguing that it's a conflict of interest for the society's insurance plan manager to be a society officer. Does not the same logic apply to John and Randy?

These are questions that should be answered soon, before they become tangled with other issues to the point where tempers will roil needlessly. If we are to have a bright new publication, let's understand now just what we can expect of it, and to what extent it will respond to the hobby's larger concerns. □

Communication Breakdown

By Ken Lawrence

Sometimes people can be too erudite for their own good.

In a popular country song, *Forever Together*, Randy Travis sings, "Forever together 'til death do we part."

Actually, of course, this stems from a misunderstanding of the standard vow, "... 'til death do us part," which, in the vernacular means, "until death parts us," i.e., separates us.

The singer's reformulation is obviously an attempt by an imperfectly educated person to avoid what he perceives to be a solecism. He knows you don't say "us part," and doesn't realize that the normal position of direct object and verb have been reversed for liturgical reasons.

The attempt to correct what wasn't a mistake leads Travis to sing the opposite of what he intends, and is nonsensical: Forever together, we part until death.

Occasionally this pseudo-erudition problem afflicts the stamp hobby. One example is a sentence contained in every Professional Stamp Expertizing certificate:

"Professional's opinions do not constitute a guarantee that an item is genuine or that others may reach a different conclusion as to description."

The author clearly intended to write, "may not reach," but got lost in his or her convoluted style. It could not have happened if the statement had been composed as two simple declarative sentences. □

Computer Corner

Computers

By Joe F. Frye

This practicing novice in computer publishing might be able to help those considering getting their own such activity started—or even if started, continue it a bit more easily.

Warning: This is basic information. Hundreds—or thousands—of choices are available in each category mentioned—as well as in categories you might not even be aware of for a long while yet.

Before you buy anything, try as much equipment as you can. Read the major computer magazines (those of about one-fourth inch or greater thickness are usually of more help).

The Computer Shopper, for example, is about two inches thick and about 12" by 14", very low cost because of the heavy advertising it brings, but will be helpful in finding choices and prices when you decide to buy.

PC Computing was and is very helpful. Look at the magazine racks; flip through what's available and choose a few. Read them very closely, and learn some of the language of the computer world before you go further.

Remember, learn before you buy. If you don't know what kind of equipment you need, find out from these and all other sources.

● Choosing "Hardware."

The first choice you face is either a Macintosh or a MS-DOS central processing unit (CPU), the box housing your drive(s) and the electronics that make the thing work, plus a "compatible" keyboard for the CPU.

It is usually to your advantage to buy a complete unit—CPU,

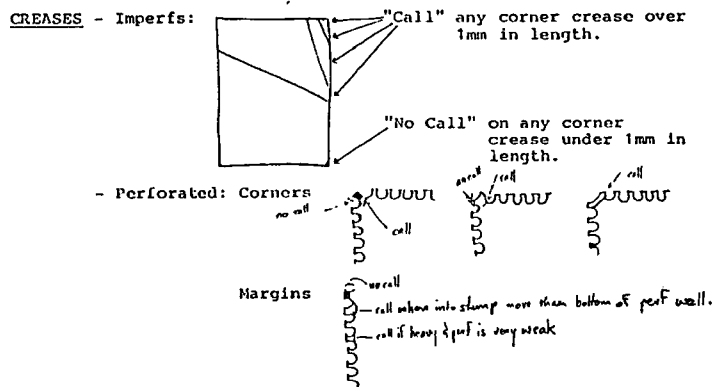
►► Computers—page 31.

Pick of the Litter-ature Award X

By Ken Lawrence

This quarter's award goes to the anonymous source who supplied the fascinating document illustrated here, which needs no additional comment. □

PROFESSIONAL STAMP EXPERTIZING SERVICE EXAMINATION GUIDELINES DECEMBER 1987 BULLETIN

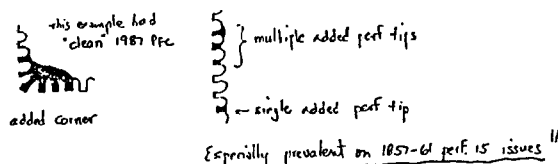


The idea is to "Call" creases on imperfs that are legitimately significant. Tiny creases at the extreme 'tip' and less than 1mm (very small) in total length are insignificant and should not be 'called' in most cases.

Heavily IRONED creases on some 19th Century USED stamps dip 'clean', especially on items with "hard paper". A UV light is most helpful in this circumstance. However, some are only detectable by soaking in WATER where they show when the water first begins to soak into the paper. THIS LATTER INFO IS FOR YOUR USE BUT DO NOT DO THIS ON ANY WORK FOR PSES!!! IT IS A BIT TOO RISKY AND MAY LEAD TO DAMAGE IF NOT DONE CAUTIOUSLY.

REPAIRS - A**L**E**R**T

Be alerted that a significantly large amount of material is circulating about with VERY EXPERT Repairs, especially ADDED PERF TIPS & TINY SEALED TEARS most commonly between perfs. We have seen a significantly alarming amount of these repaired stamps with 'Clean' PF certificates. PSES will not allow this to pass through undescribed so be on the lookout. Some examples are shown below



FILLED THINS - Most filled thins can be detected in fluid but we have seen many small filled thins dip 'clean', much to our dismay and amazement. However, expert use of a UV lamp makes their detection quite easy as they show up as PURPLE AREAS. This same technique holds true for repaired pinholes. If you don't have a UV lamp, get one! They are very useful.

REPERFORATING - This is a tough subject and repair techniques in this area are getting very sophisticated. Do your level best based on your expertise. Further discussion on this subject will be released on a regular basis.

TEARS - Please be ALERTED to heavy amounts of 19th Century mint and used stamps with sealed tears, especially small tears between perfs!! They are very hard to see but usually dip "funny". However, a UV light may again be employed to detect these tiny repairs with relative ease. You may even be able to see some 'glue' on the surface of the paper on the design side if the repairperson was a bit sloppy. Check it out!!!!

O.G., NEVER HINGED - This column on the Worksheet is for INERTNAL USE ONLY!!! PSES certificates will not give an opinion on NH, only whether it is 'original gum' and unused. However, we are keeping this info internally for use when 'repair' (regumming or airbrushing) is performed subsequent to PSES certification.

O.G., HINGED - Same as above.

Additions will be released to the Board of Consultants on a regular basis and as the information becomes available. Please contact Randy at the Home Office if you have any questions or further areas of discussion you feel are necessary or helpful.

►► Computers—from page 30.

display, and keyboard—rather than try to assemble your own. Compatibility is assured and total cost usually less in buying the complete unit (also called a system).

If you have been following the computer-oriented text in *The Philatelic Communicator* for the past couple of years you know there are two competitive desktop computer systems: IBM (or IBM-clone) and Apple. These are somewhat reminiscent of the early days of video cassette recorders, that saw both Beta and VHS formats of tape—non-interchangeable. There is some software available that allow users of one system to interchange information with the other, but their basic programs are generally incompatible.

The choice of IBM (or clone) or Apple must be made before you begin acquiring software or hardware. Goose eggs won't hatch eagles. It is unlikely that you will find the owner of either system very complimentary of the other system. Be aware of the zealots of both camps and make your choice calmly.

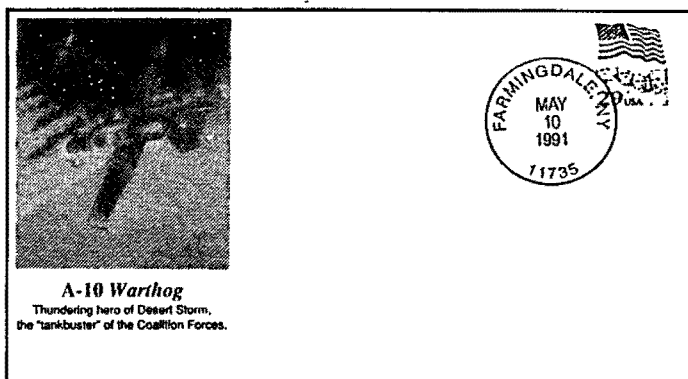
● The display. The video screen that displays characters and graphics involved in the immediate task. Color or monochrome? The monochrome screen is available in black, green, or orange background with white "writing." Before buying, look at what is available and if possible work for a while with a CPU and the various kinds of screens. Some eyes do not adapt well to some screens.

You will find a keyboard that is satisfactory if you examine the available types. Here there is no substitute for actually typing with the keyboard if you can. Some of them have no response at all—they feel like pounding a marshmallow. Others sound like tapping your long fingernails against an empty tin can. And others are in between.

What you like should govern.

● Hard Drive. Megabyte: (Meg or Mb). One Mb equals 1 million pieces of information. Determine what you need in hard-drive capacity. A 40-meg hard drive holds slightly over 40 million "bytes" of data.

►► Computers—Page 32.



Writers Unit 30 Contest Number One

Explain the significance of the cancel on this Fleetwood cover. Send your answer on a postal card to the editor. Enter as often as you like. Entries must be received by May 10, 1992. All correct answers will be entered in a drawing to be held at the World Columbian Stamp Expo Writers Breakfast. The winner will receive an Abbott and Costello Stamp Print, an 11- by 14-inch matted reproduction of the stamp design by Al Hirshfeld, with the actual stamp affixed and canceled first day of issue, retail value \$14.95. You need not be present at the drawing to win. All WU30 members are eligible to participate. □

►► Computers— from page 31.

I strongly urge you to buy all the memory you can afford. If you think a 40-meg hard drive will do, you may well be cursing in a few months at having to delete something to make space for that new software. I have already found this problem and when possible will be upgrading to at least 100 Mb.

● **Printers.** After you get all that marvelous information, or that fat manuscript, typed into your new toy, you must have a way of getting it out.

The major choices are dot-matrix or laser printers. The dot-matrix printer is usually either 9- or 24-pin. The 24-pin will print much more attractive and legible text. The 9-pin is fine for quick printing of data that doesn't have to look like letterpress or photo offset. The latter is what you are looking at—done with a Hewlett-Packard *LaserJet III* laser printer, then photo-sensitive plates made from the laser-printed masters are used to produce the pages by offset printing.

I had to produce one issue of our journal with a 24-pin dot-matrix printer (Epson *LQ-510*) between the death of my original laser, the first Epson brand laser printer, and the acquisition of my fine Hewlett-Packard *LaserJet III*. The result was legible but a good way away from the excellent appearance of the present method. There was the added cost of having to use a one-time-use carbon film ribbon with that *LQ-510* to get the best possible image for the photo process.

The Epson *LQ-510* is an excellent printer, and if you have a real dollar problem (it is about \$250 street price) it is a remarkable buy. I have had no problems whatever with it, and it prints envelopes, single sheets, or continuous paper with ease and excellence. The *LaserJet III* is about \$1,600 street price. I would not recommend anything less than the *LJIII* in features and capabilities, if you're going to a laser printer.

Now
that
I
have
your
attention . . .

Writers Unit 30 Contest Number Two!

Writers Unit 30 officers and Council members are not eligible to enter, but all other WU30 members are encouraged to participate. The winner will be the first entrant to recruit twenty-five (25) new WU30 members by August 30, 1992. For purposes of this contest, "new" members will include former members who had not renewed their memberships by March 30, 1992. The prize will be a Philatelic Collectible, described by the Postal Service as a "limited edition [5,000], hand-cast paper relief of the USPS Olympic composite logo accompanied by the 1990 American Olympians commemorative stamps. Each piece is numbered and dated, then museum mounted and richly framed in a shadow box to add depth and protected by shatter-resistant plexi-glass." Retail value is \$119.92.

Prize will be awarded at the STAmPsHOW Writers Breakfast. The winner need not be present. □

● **Programs (software).** You will find a program, or more than one, for almost any general or special task. *WordPerfect* is one of the most popular "desktop publishing" word processing programs. About \$260 street (mail-order) price. I use version 5.1 and find it excellent. It has a few peculiarities, but so do I.

The operating system software (that comes with a system) is (for IBM and clones) usually a version of DOS. (Disk Operating System.) Version 5.0 of DOS is available and should be secured. Don't buy a lower-numbered version. I have used it for several months and find it excellent. I am not aware of the choices in Apple equipment.

My copy of *WordPerfect for Windows* arrived February 21, 1992. I will install it after this issue is produced by *WordPerfect 5.1*—with which I am familiar—and mailed. Will try to comment on the new program in next issue.

Inquiries welcomed if accompanied by the SASE. □

Modems and Philatelic Writers

By Lloyd A. de Vries

If you use a computer for your writing, you ought to look into a modem.

A modem allows computers to talk to each other and exchange information over telephone lines. For most applications—certainly all those involved in writing—it doesn't matter much what types of computers they are.

For example, I transmit my columns to *Stamp Collector* and *Stamp Wholesaler* with an Apple II3; they receive it on a Tandy Laptop. On the GENie computer network, I exchange messages with other writers who use *Macintosh*, *MS-DOS*, *Atari*, *Amiga*, and other computers, all via GENie's mainframe.

What are the advantages of submitting articles via modem? First, what you write is what ends up in the publication's

computer. I remember writing a column for *Stamp Collector* in which I first mentioned that I hated the misspelling of cachetmakers' names (such as "Farnam"), and then talked about Harry Iloor. The column was faxed to Van Dahl. Whoever retyped the article into their computer replaced "Iloor" with "Toor" each time I had used the name. Boy, did I get letters!

Now, with my columns transmitted by modem, it's still possible for an editor to decide I didn't really mean what I wrote, but . . . Most of the typos now are my own.

Second, it's quicker. I always push deadlines (sometimes from the wrong side), and if I had to mail my material to Oregon, Ohio, or middle-of-nowhere New York, I'd have to leave an extra week for the Postal Service to work its wonders. (As in, I "wonder" how someone's bill payment to a bank in New York City from an address near me ended up in my mailbox.)

Quicker also means less expensive, when you compare fax versus a modem. I can transmit a thousand-word column in less than a minute by modem, while it takes several minutes by facsimile, and \$10 by Express Mail. And modems don't use up paper. On the other hand, while it might cost 52 cents to mail an article to a publisher, my calls to Van Dahl in Oregon during business hours cost me about a dollar each.

The major on-line computer network systems, such as the one to which I belong, GENie, include electronic encyclopedias. I can look up facts without visiting the library or giving in to guilt-mongers and buying a set "for my kids." There are also special "roundtables" and libraries for writers and other special interest groups.

So, if I were writing an article on, say, the 1992 U.S. stamp schedule and I wanted to know the significance of a photographer being honored, I might pose a question at the PHOTO roundtable. Recently, I also "pitched" a story to a newspaper editor in the Midwest I met on GENie.

Some modems also have facsimile, or "fax," capability, which means they can send your material from your computer to a fax machine. Also, many of the on-line services will provide this service for a small fee.

Finally, I sometimes find time to write articles or parts of articles at work, using the computer there. I then "mail" the copy to myself, call the company's computer from home, and "pick up my mail." This article is an example.

Of course, there are disadvantages to modems, too. I haven't found a piece of computer hardware or software yet that I can get to work right the first time, even after reading the manual—but I suspect I contribute to that. Modem systems can be complex and a problem might be in anything from the telephone line to the modem itself.

And, the temptation to spend time chatting and leaving messages with one of the on-line services when I should be working is sometimes overwhelming . . . and expensive.

Still, submitting articles by modem is the future. Just as practically all of us use computers or word processors now instead of typewriters, just as few editors will accept handwritten manuscripts, soon most of us will submit our stories, articles, and even books by modem. □

Letters

From the Salm Foundation's Secret Laboratory (to Les Winick): Ken Lawrence's letters have been reviewed. There is no attempt in our comments to give him an answer point-for-point. We are an independent testing laboratory and not a research or education institution.

The purpose of the testing program initiated by the Arthur Salm Foundation was a first step attempt to determine/measure the archival quality or permanence of currently available philatelic materials. The program is a good one as now being implemented.

Perhaps more thorough procedures can be devised and implemented at a later date based on the findings of the current tests. Such future tests may be specific to combinations of materials—for example, stamps mounted with hinges on acid pages/alkaline pages, etc.

It has been established that alkaline-grade papers exhibit considerably more permanence than ordinary pulp papers containing alum.

By using neutral sizing technology, it is possible to manufacture paper at a pH above 7 and, therefore, incorporate calcium carbonate as a filler in the coating. Neutral sizing in itself improves the

permanence by eliminating acid from the sheet normally associated with rosin/alum sizing systems. The presence of calcium carbonate gives an added measure of permanence because it has the capability of absorbing acidic gases from the environment that might cause deterioration of the paper.

More and more paper mills in the United States are converting to neutral sizing technology and use of CaCO₃ as a buffer in paper, attesting to the efficiency and wide acceptance of the technology.

In the case of philatelic material, a collector has a choice: (1) mount expensive stamps on ordinary pulp-acid-alum paper which is known to degrade within 50 to 75 years with possible damage or destruction of the stamps due to contact or (2) mount the stamps on an alkaline-grade paper which is known to have 200 to 300 years of permanency and will protect the mounted stamps from acid formation, absorption, adsorption, or whatever.

The point that Lawrence makes of using magnesium ethyl or methyl carbonate as a deacidification agent on philatelic material is open to question. He does not take under consideration the staining,

color bleeding, or residual chemical powder that the solvents in this treatment process leave on treated book pages, let alone precious colored artwork or stamps. The chemicals cited are probably effective for deacidifying library books but further work would have to be done on philatelic materials.

All tests were performed on numerically coded samples. The manufacturer of the philatelic item was not known at the time of testing.

Regarding pH pen accuracy: the pH pens and sprays at best are rough approximations of the actual pH of a paper as determined by a cold or hot extraction method.

Finally, on this project, the laboratory is using standard TAPPI, ASTM, or ANSI test methods that are accepted by the paper industry as the state of the art. □

From Les Winick: Re the First Quarter PC:

I think Mark Kellner's comments about "who was first with the demise of the gimmicks being sold by the USPS?" is a tempest in a teapot. An article in *Business Week* of November 25, 1991, stated that "Frank will use outside ven-

▶▶

dors to sell postal merchandise in the future." It didn't state that an Assistant Postmaster General made that decision, it said Frank. I feel that the head of any agency is responsible for decisions made in his agency.

My Insider column of December 9, 1991, quoted *Business Week* and Frank in that decision. After reading *Business Week*, I called up sources in the USPS who confirmed the magazine article.

You state that the two German groups have more members than the APS. I checked on this figure when I was in Germany in 1990 with officers of both groups. They laughed when I quoted the totals you mentioned. These figures, according to the officers of these groups, are the totals of various clubs in each country.

One person I met belongs to seven different clubs, a portion of his dues from each club goes to the Bund Deutscher Philatelisten, and they count him as seven in their total membership. By the way, due to an efficient computer system, he only receives one copy of the magazine. Other collectors told me that they receive multiple copies of the magazine.

I will hold with my statement that the APS is the world's largest stamp group. I can't consider Russia (in the old days) when collectors had to join a group in order to exchange stamps, attend meetings at the local cultural center, and take part in other activities. The key word is "had" to join, and dues were so low that every Soviet collector joined. The government heavily subsidized the groups with free rent, glossy publications at low or no cost, and free exhibit areas. How can this be compared to APS?

Re your continuing criticism to the Salm Foundation. I will state that we contracted a laboratory to do testing of products on the market, not to do basic research. This was not and is not our function. If it were, then a report would never have been issued. You are mixing up the two programs and perhaps you should start a research program to develop better paper and products. Since you seem to know so much about it, I'll let you handle it.

The Salm Foundation undertook a job that has never been done before in our field and we are still the only group that tests products and publishes our results in the philatelic area. Frankly, just getting collectors aware of the damage that could be done by some of the commercial prod-

ucts is a reason to be proud of our accomplishments in such a short time. □

From John F. Dunn: Thanks for the "Circulation . . ." article in the First Quarter 1992 issue. You make some excellent points, particularly with regard to the opportunities in presenting a primarily cultural message, and the lack of same in the weeklies.

I would like to think that we have been going in that direction at *Mekeel's* for the last three years; your comments will only serve to stimulate further efforts to emphasize feature articles and columns of long-term interest to our subscribers.

One small correction regarding my comments in the November 1 *Mekeel's* regarding circulation changes. If you will refer to that article, you will note that I observed that *Stamps* "held its own" last year in the average numbers, not that they dropped precipitously.

I also pointed out that our own growth had slowed from the prior year. (I bring this up because I try to be objective in these analyses, and your comment "Dunn, naturally . . ." might leave writers who did not have access to my column with just the opposite impression.) □

From Barry Newton: I'm glad to see *First Days* is still in the top ten. We hope to recover through new membership procedures—World Columbian Stamp Expo recruiting, etc. □

From Ralph Mitchener: As both an exhibitor and a judge of stamps columns in non-philatelic newspapers, I've a few observations to make about the comments of Terence Hines and Barth Healey in the First Quarter 1992 *Philatelic Communicator*.

Hines may have a poor opinion about most such columns, but I can assure him that in Canada, at least, there are some that are not "sorry things." I expect that there are a number of good ones in the United States as well.

I have the impression that Healey resented his silver STaMpsHOW '91 medal. Did he really expect a gold? Is there not a hierarchy of awards in open philatelic literature competitions? Does any stamps column truly equate with the efforts of Bayley, Mueller, and Stone that he mentioned? I think not.

Is not his silver a respectable award—indeed a very respectable one—in an open national-level competi-

tion not restricted to stamps columns? Like it or not, our columns are not on a par with entries requiring much more effort and research.

As Healey pointed out, our hobby certainly needs all the help it can get. Newspaper columns can, and often do, lend such support. I've written a weekly stamps column in *The Ottawa Citizen* since late 1983 and have seen the space available for it shrink over the years.

The majority of my readers are not stamp collectors. It is a real challenge to try to make the columns appeal to non-collectors, to all levels of collectors, and, of course, to the newspaper authorities who are the ultimate judges as to whether or not the columns will continue to appear. □

From Janet Klug: I was flabbergasted to see that my little doodles landed me a "Pick of the Litter-ature" award! I'm honored . . . I think.

To say that the cartoons were anonymous is not exactly correct. Members of the local club (and *S&T* is primarily distributed locally) knew I was the culprit. The first several cartoons I drew for *S&T* contained my signature, but I didn't like the way it predominated the design, particularly when the cartoons were reduced to fit the pages of *S&T*.

So then I switched to hiding my initials in every cartoon . . . sometimes in several places within the cartoon. You can still find them in the *PC* reproductions, even though these have been further reduced. Further, those outside the local club who wanted to know who the cartoonist was knew who the cartoonist was (is). (Evidence: Randy Neil.)

Nevertheless, I'd be willing to bet there will be a few WU30 members who will be surprised to learn what a vicious sense of humor I have. I only hope my past (and future) victims will realize that the cartoons are done with the express purpose to poke fun at some of the sacred cows of philately. Some of the people and organizations in this hobby take themselves far too seriously.

Thanks again. Another enjoyable issue of *PC* (even without the cartoons). □

From Bob Rawlins: The First Quarter *PC* is excellent, the kind of publication that I think we should be publishing for other writers. Such criticism as is included was reasoned rather than of the cut and slash variety.

The information on literature competitions is appropriate.

The "Computer Corner" article had a good many tips for writers just getting into that aspect of publishing. Desktop publishing is advancing in leaps and bounds and WU30 needs to keep current in that respect.

I would have objected strongly to the cartoons had the artist (?) not been identified. If a member wants to criticize or lampoon, the member should have the guts to identify him or herself.

Joe did a nice job with the three-

column awards data. That is hard to do with WordPerfect 5.1. □

From Herman Herst Jr. I enjoyed every one of your contributions to the latest issue of *The Philatelic Communicator*, and I even agree with most of them.

Did you notice the piece in *The United States Specialist* attacking me? It was not nice of the editor to run it without giving me a chance to answer it. I hope that my reply will be in the next issue. □

From James Bendon: I am pleased to offer reduced prices to your members:

Philatelic Literature

..... \$45.00 instead of \$50.00
The Harris Index

..... \$26.50 instead of \$29.50
or both titles \$63.00 instead of \$79.50.

In all cases postage and packing is included, from James Bendon Philatelic Publishing, P.O. Box 6484, Limassol, Cyprus. □

Editor's note: *Philatelic Literature* was reviewed in the *First Quarter 1991* PC. *The Harris Index* will be reviewed in a future issue. □

Reviews

Note from the editor: Some publishers, including the American Philatelic Society, Precancel Stamp Society, and The Printer's Stone, Ltd., refuse to send review copies of books to this publication, instead supplying news releases and canned reviews. That is unacceptable. The *Philatelic Communicator* provides the most useful and comprehensive book reviews that our hobby offers, tailored to the specific needs of the people who make the greatest use of reference materials. In general, it is my policy not to review books unless review copies are available, although I make occasional exceptions with great reluctance, as when Henry Beecher volunteered to review *Fundamentals of Philately*, and in my own review here that includes two PSS catalogs, because the review would be incomplete without them. If an important stamp book doesn't get a review here, it usually means that the publisher has declined to send a review copy. Reviewers are assigned with the aim of providing the evaluation of greatest use to writers, not necessarily to the hobby as a whole. □

U.S. Stamp Catalogs . . .

By Ken Lawrence

Scott 1992 Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps. 64A + 638 + unnumbered advertising pages. ISBN 0-89487-166-8. 8¼ by 10¼ inches, soft cover, Scott Publishing Co., 911 Vandemark Rd., Sidney, OH 45365. \$30 postpaid.

Scott 1992 First Day Cover Catalogue. 272 pages. ISBN 0-89487-173-0. 4¼ by 7 inches, soft cover. Scott Publishing Co., 911 Vandemark Rd., Sidney, OH 45365. \$5.95 postpaid.

Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogue. Part 22. United States. Third edition. 1990. x + 274 + unnumbered advertising pages. ISBN 0-85259-279-5. 5¼ by 8½ inches, soft cover. \$34.59 from Lighthouse Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 705, Hackensack, NJ 07602-0705.

Michel USA-Spezialkatalog 1992. 584 pages. ISBN 3-87858-332-X. 6 by 7¾ inches, soft cover. \$39.50 from Lighthouse Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 705, Hackensack, NJ 07602-0705.

Catalog of the 20th Century Stamped Envelopes and Wrappers of the United States 1990 and *Catalog of the 20th Century Stamped Envelopes Supplement 1985-1990* edited by Austin P. Haller. Catalog 496 pages + template insert, supplement unnumbered. 6 by 9¼ inches, hard cover catalog, saddle-stitched supplement. United Postal Stationery Society, Box 48, Redlands, CA 92373.

United States Postal Card Catalog 1990 edited by John H. Beach-

board. 315 pages. 6 by 9¼ inches, hard cover. United Postal Stationery Society, Box 48, Redlands, CA 92373.

Precancel Stamp Society Catalog of United States Bureau Precancels. Third edition, August 1990. xxxvii + 196 + unnumbered advertising pages. 8½ by 11 inches, three-hole drilled, loose leaf. PSS Catalogs, P.O. Box 926, Framingham, MA 01701. \$10.

The Precancel Stamp Society's Town and Type Catalog of the United States and Territories. Fifth edition, July 1990. vi + 33 + pages numbered by state (1¼ inches thick). 5½ by 8½ inches, three-hole drilled, loose leaf. PSS Catalogs, P.O. Box 926, Framingham, MA 01701. \$20.

1992 U.S. Errors—Inverts, Imperforates, Colors Omitted by Stephen R. Datz. v + 111 + unnumbered advertising pages. ISBN 0-88219-027-X. 6 by 9 inches, soft cover. General Philatelic Corporation, P.O. Box 402, Loveland, CO 80539. \$12.95.

Plate Number Coil Catalog 1991 edited by Stephen G. Esrati. Seventh edition. xii + 72 pages. 8½ by 11 inches, stapled. Stephen G. Esrati, P.O. Box 20130, Shaker Heights, OH 44120-0120. \$17.50.

It hasn't always been so, but these days any writer who wants to cover U.S. stamps comprehensively must own or have easy access to all these references. That is especially true of those whose focus is modern issues.

This year's Scott specialized will be required by classicists too, with its first-ever inclusion of essays. The addition of so many new pages in addition to those required by new issues may account for the substantial price jump from \$26 last year to \$30 this year.

Otherwise, the good news about Scott is that it finally has moved to provide truly specialized listings for modern stamps comparable to those always given for classic stamps. The main progress in the 1990 and 1991 editions consisted of including subtle perforation differences. Writers have made the greatest gain in the 1992 edition with the listings of two different kinds of dry-printed (Cottrell press) Liberty Series coil stamps—those printed from 384-subject plates (with large perforation holes) and those from 432-subject plates (small holes).

Previously, these distinctions were regarded as arcane curiosities akin to flyspecks. Now they are recognized as different stamps that logically belong in a serious U.S. collection. Already the floors of major stamp shows and suburban bourses are humming with collectors searching for the ones they don't have, showing how much a catalog listing serves to define what exists.

The main Scott specialized doesn't have truly specialized listings ▶▶

of first-day covers, but the companion pocket-size first-day cover catalog has the most complete treatment of any current book, and gets better each year. It is more useful than it was before, now that the pricing has been standardized to match the abbreviated listings in the main catalog, and with no cachet multiplier yielding a price below the basic listing (except for a typographical error on the chart for 1932 to 1939 1oor cachets).

However, Scott has some distance to go before it can be regarded as "specialized" in its listings of precanceled stamps, postal stationery, and plate number coils. Thus, writers especially will need to use the Precancel Stamp Society (PSS), and Esrati catalogs.

The PNC catalog is an annual, but the 1991 edition will be the last to be edited by Esrati, and his successor, Richard Nazar, plans major changes that may include omitting some material that Esrati regarded as important, as well as adding new areas. So if you think just one update every few years is adequate, it would still be wise to acquire the 1991 edition.

The PSS and UPSS catalogs are updated infrequently, so access to the latest edition of each book is essential if you cover these areas. For stamps, the catalog of Bureau precancels is the important one; the previous edition came out in 1982, and was only 64 pages. This is more than a mere supplement to Scott, it is an important corrective.

As for U.S. postal stationery, I can't see how any writer can approach the subject seriously without access to the UPSS catalogs. Scott's listings compare to the stamped envelope and postal card catalogs as the Postal Service Guide stamp listings compare to Scott.

The PSS and UPSS catalogs are so well done that they can stand alone for most writers' purposes, meaning you can use them without the necessity of referring also to Scott on their specialty subjects. The same cannot be said of the Datz error catalog. Its principal virtues are its portability, its organization strategy (by type of error, then chronologically), and its estimates of known quantities.

The PSS and UPSS catalog numbers are essential for specialists in those fields. The Datz and Esrati numbering systems are superfluous, although subscribers to *The Plate Number* need Esrati's numbers to decode the magazine's text.

Michel and Gibbons numbers are generally useless to U.S. collectors, and therefore to writers here. But the Michel catalog remains the best organized of the lot, and therefore the handiest to use by a fact-checker who wants to be sure that nothing has been overlooked. Michel is also easiest to use if you want to look up gum or tagging varieties; Scott finally includes these, but not in user-friendly fashion.

The advantage of Gibbons for most of us is its English-language text, but Michel compensates somewhat with the yellow brochure explaining its terms, symbols, and organization scheme in English. Gibbons is handier, about half the thickness and weight of Michel, only because it isn't truly specialized. But Gibbons has separate checklists of booklets and plate number coils that its rivals would do well to emulate.

Even if you have all these books at hand, a couple of older, out-of-print catalogs can make many of your tasks a lot simpler. One is *The Noble Official Catalog of Bureau Precancels*, because within each state its listings are by stamp rather than by overprint, which can speed up some searches.

The other is the *Minkus New American Stamp Catalog*, which gives more complete design information about individual stamps than Scott does. Leon J. Cheris's treatment of luminescent issues in the Minkus catalog has yet to be equalled.

Our readers are expecting from us a greater sophistication than

ever before. That's largely a consequence of improvements in the Scott catalog over the past five years, which have raised the expectations and lengthened the want lists of most U.S. collectors. It's an interesting paradox that in order to write at the level required, we need to supplement Scott with so many other specialized catalogs. □

... and Auxiliary References

By Ken Lawrence

Linn's Philatelic Gems 5 by Donna O'Keefe. viii + 166 pages. ISBN 0-940403-44-7. 5½ by 8½ inches, soft cover, Linn's Stamp News, P.O. Box 29, Sidney, OH 45365. \$9.95 postpaid.

The Micarelli Identification Guide to U.S. Stamps by Charles N. Micarelli. 156 pages. ISBN 0-89487-177-3. 7¼ by 10¼ inches, hard cover. Scott Publishing Co., 911 Vandemark Rd., Sidney, OH 45365. \$34.95.

I list both of these books as auxiliary United States stamp references, even though *Gems 5*, like its four predecessors, is mainly about foreign stamps. That isn't to slight its value as a worldwide reference; it's just to say that I believe most writers will use this book, as I shall, mainly as a handy source on the U.S. stamps that are included.

If you think that pickings might be getting thin now that O'Keefe has reached volume five, think again. To me, the story of the Puerto Principe provisionals, a *Gems 5* chapter, is of equal rank with the Basel Dove, a *Gems 1* chapter. But the real treat in the new book consists of the 20th Century U.S. rarities—the 1¢ Benjamin Franklin coil waste issue, Scott 596; the perf 12 15¢ John Paul Jones commemorative on cover; and "The CIA Invert," the \$1 Rush Lamp stamp in the Americana series with the intaglio portion inverted.

O'Keefe's books supply the background lore that you need, or handy access to known quantities, pedigrees, and fabled transactions. *Gems 5* has cameo portraits of more than 70 very special stamps and covers.

The newly-revised Micarelli guide is definitely handier than the front pages of the Scott specialized catalog for identifying face-similar regular 1847 to 1934 U.S. issues. Its organization scheme is by series and then by ascending denomination, with the stamp design illustrated, including detail enlargements and schematic drawings where appropriate, followed by a listing of all the variants and the methods to identify them.

This is the clearest of the published U.S. identifiers I've seen, but of course is no better than any other as a guide to the most difficult problems (such as paper types), where no written text can substitute for comparison with a reference copy. It's a definite improvement over the 1969 book I've used for last 20 years, *Scott's Know Your U.S. Stamps* by Lilly B. Freed.

What baffles me is why the front contains two pages of errata, harking back to the days of linotype. Surely in these days of computerized typography and graphic design, it isn't a problem to make textual corrections even after page proofs have been prepared. □

Foreign and Worldwide Catalogs

By Ken Lawrence

Scott 1992 Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue. Volume 3. Countries of the World G-O. 32A + 1,205 + unnumbered advertising pages. ISBN 0-89487-164-1. *Scott 1992 Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue. Volume 4. Countries of the World P-Z.* 33A + 1,101 +

unnumbered advertising pages. ISBN 0-89487-165-X. 8 1/4 by 11 inches, soft cover. Scott Publishing-Co., 911 Vandemark Rd., Sidney, OH 45365. \$30 per volume postpaid.

Michel Europa-Katalog Ost 1991/92. 1,605 plus unnumbered advertising pages. ISBN 3-87858-269-2. 6 by 7 3/4 inches, soft cover. \$49.50 from Lighthouse Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 705, Hackensack, NJ 07602-0705.

Michel Europa-Katalog West 1991/92 (Länder M-Z). 2,685 + unnumbered advertising pages. ISBN 3-87858-270-6. 6 by 7 3/4 inches, soft cover, \$59.50 from Lighthouse Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 705, Hackensack, NJ 07602-0705.

Michel Übersee-Katalog Band 5. Asien 1991/92 (Länder K-Z). 2,193 + unnumbered advertising pages + foldout map. ISBN 3-87858-738-4. 6 by 7 3/4 inches, soft cover. \$85 from Lighthouse Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 705, Hackensack, NJ 07602-0705.

Michel Ganzsachen-Katalog Europa West 1990. 688 pages plus perforation gauge. ISBN 3-87858-619-1. 6 by 7 3/4 inches, soft cover. \$89 from Lighthouse Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 705, Hackensack, NJ 07602-0705.

Sakura Catalog of Japanese Stamps 1992. 240 pages. ISBN 4-88963-469-X. 5 7/8 by 8 1/4 inches, soft cover. Japan Philatelic Society Foundation, Box 1, Shinjuku, Tokyo, Japan. 600 yen plus postage.

Stamp writers here are fortunate that the Scott catalog continues to update the entire world every year, so we don't have a long wait to learn about the new issues. Michel, by contrast, updates its European stamp volumes each year (the West European postal stationery volume less frequently), but is on a five-year rotation for the rest of the world.

Scott covers the world in four large volumes, with its British Empire first volume, and non-British three others, including the two under review here. Michel covers Europe in three fat books, plus the additional one for West European postal stationery, and divides the non-European world into five regional pieces—Africa, Asia, Australia/Oceania, North and Central America, and South America.

Asia is further subdivided into the two books reviewed here plus a slender third book (*Asien II*), outside the regular rotation, that lists the Trucial states and the Aden/Yemen entities. (Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates, and basic Aden and Yemen are in the main Asia books.)

From Scott we get timely listings, in English, at the lowest price. From Michel we get a better-organized, better illustrated, more comprehensive catalog of handier configuration, but requiring a lot more shelf space, and a West European postal stationery listing that has no rival.

Last year Michel included a wall map of Europe with the West Europe volumes, but no map was supplied this time. Perhaps they're busy redrawing it in light of the centrifugal political occurrences that have afflicted the continent since 1989, not least in the publisher's own country.

Although Scott is closing the gap, its listings are still incomplete. Even in cases where the listings themselves are comparable, Michel's more comprehensive illustrations can often be the key to extracting a great deal more information that's needed for a story. For my topical writing, Michel is still indispensable.

Scott's progress is commendable, and in a few more years it may be the world's most complete. Even if that happens, there will be cases where the foreign catalog are more useful. Lately I've been doing a lot of writing about Japan, a country that is covered comprehensively by Scott. Nevertheless, I invariably turn to the

small, well-organized, full-color Sakura catalog as the quickest reference for this work, and for fact-checking. If you haven't met the Sakura catalog, you've missed out on one of the world's best.

For the areas I cover, Scott's volume three is now lacking only the 1980 overprints of Nicaragua to be up to date, and the 1992 volume says they are coming. Volume four has been enhanced by the Turkish occupation issues for Northern Cyprus, and the incorporation of former "For the Record" stamps of Panama and Uruguay into the main listings. Yugoslavia is now spelled with a Y, just as that country reverts to Balkanized fragments.

We still await the day when one worldwide catalog will meet nearly all of a stamp writer's requirements. In the meantime, I'm happy to have all the books under review here. Even with them, I'm not ready to dispense with some of my older, out-of-print worldwide catalogs, especially Minkus and Lipsia. □

Cover Art

By Alan Warren

American Illustrated Cover Catalog: The Collection of John R. Biddle, 272 pages, 8 1/4 by 11 1/4 inches, illustrated (heavily), hard-bound, 1981. \$50 (\$29.95 in soft cover) plus \$2 shipping from David G. Phillips Co., Inc., Box 611388, North Miami FL 33161.

Yes, that publication date is 1981. Laid in is the list of prices realized at the sale of the Biddle collection, January 28-29, 1982. This "catalog" exemplifies how a transient printed piece can be prepared with care and quality to result in a lasting reference work.

In his foreword, Biddle tells how he got started in 1970 with a lot of 70 illustrated covers. His collection grew to 13,000 and he claims to have seen some 750,000 such covers over a period of eleven years. The real value of this catalog is that half the pages (in fact the right-hand ones specifically) are excellent color photos of the covers offered in this sale.

The left-hand pages are the lot descriptions, usually with two or three black-and-white illustrations at the bottom of the page. The facing pages show portions of about 18 covers, opposite their descriptions. Most illustrations are at the left side of the cover. However, one exception is where the designs surround the stamp. Purists will tell you that these illustrations, just as cachets on first day covers, did not "carry" the mail. But those who appreciate history, nostalgia, and fine printing will find this book a joy.

Postal historian Richard B. Graham contributes an introduction, pointing out that whether you call this kind of material postal history or not doesn't lessen the important contribution that the catalog makes to the hobby. Dealer David Phillips also has an introductory note followed by a brief description of printing techniques used to make the covers, and a guide to the catalog descriptions.

The table of contents shows the organization of the auction listing, beginning with the stampless period and followed by specific stamp issues on the covers chronologically up to the Pan American issue. Subject matter then takes over with categories of automobiles, expositions and centennials, food and drink, guns and powder, etc. A subject index at the back of the catalog leads the reader to specific topics such as animal, bicycle, clothing, ethnic, fire engine, etc.

A final index identifies the listings by state origin, with the exception of New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, as those three states account for over half the lots. The collection was a landmark, and this catalog will long be an important reference on the illustrated covers of the United States. □

Key to Old German Postal History

By Ernst M. Cohn

Wörterbuch zur deutschen Postgeschichte (Dictionary of German Postal History), by Erich and Eberhard Kuhlmann, Hamburg 1990, 89 + xx pages, illustrations, tables, 8½ by 11½ inches, soft cover, glued, DM 25 (post office account Hamburg, BLZ 200 100 20, No. 171 26-209, Erich Kuhlmann, Hamburg), from Erich Kuhlmann, Hindenburgstrasse 58, W-2000 Hamburg 60, Germany.

According to the authors, the book covers post-office expressions (and related material) from the 16th century to the 1870s. They do not claim to have a complete collection of all relevant words.

A page of abbreviations is followed by the dictionary itself, and that is followed by an appendix about Heinrich von Stephan, and another one giving an outline of the history of the posts, with emphasis on that of Germany.

The book is very useful to the German-speaking or -reading postal historian. I do not advocate a translation of it into other languages, since it is concerned particularly with German postal history. I should, however, like to see equivalent books compiled in other languages, pertaining to other postal histories.

There are all sorts of old expressions in every language that are not quite clear anymore (or totally enigmatic) to modern readers and students. Having lists of such postal history expressions for easy reference would greatly lighten the task of reading old documents.

This book is an excellent example for compilers of such dictionaries in other tongues. It is a reference work that ought to be available in every serious philatelic reference library. □

British Censorship in WW II

By Alan Warren

British Empire Civil Censorship Devices World War II: United Kingdom by Anthony R. Torrance and Konrad Morenweiser, 8¼ by 11¾ inches, softbound, 246 pages, illustrations, 1991. \$35 postpaid from Civil Censorship Study Group, c/o L. Dann Mayo, Box 20837, Indianapolis IN 46220.

Like any good title page of an exhibit, the preface of this book tells the reader what is included and excluded. The book covers censorship devices used on civilian private and commercial mail as well as the use of these devices on military, POW, and internee mail. The authors exclude the POW censor marks used at the Isle of Man camps, and censorship markings used by military units. The illustrated covers are from the holdings of a dozen collectors, including the authors.

British censorship was first conducted in Liverpool but shortly after the outbreak of the war, the operations were largely shifted to London. Chapter 1 provides a good background on the establishment and operation of the censorship program in England, including training of censors, and some indication of the extensive staffing required for this effort.

Some insight into the censorship chain of command and important points for censors to watch for are revealed from the notebook of an examiner. The first chapter concludes with a discussion of Thomas Cook & Sons, forwarding agents, and the use of Box 601 Amsterdam and Box 506 Lisbon. The second chapter describes the handling of philatelic mail (e.g., first day covers), mail brought into the country by travellers, and press mail.

The third chapter identifies the various types of censor hand-stamps and includes a brief mention of the use of wax seals, while chapter 4 treats the resealing labels and tapes. These are identified

by the government's numbering system, and examples of each are shown. These include the so-called "interim" labels used between the P.C. 66 and the P.C. 90 tapes.

The final chapter is devoted to descriptions and illustrations of the various printed forms and memoranda. Standard form letters were often enclosed in examined letters such as warnings, advice on missing contents, the ban on picture post cards, and various other prohibitions.

One of the major strengths of this book is the extensive use of illustrative material to supplement the text, providing the reader with clear examples. Many of the censor devices are shown on cover. The quality of these illustrations is generally quite good. However, there are several technical deficiencies that make this book much less useful than it might otherwise have been.

To begin with, there is no index. Second, the table of contents has no page numbers. Chapters 1 and 4 do have their own tables of contents with page numbers, but the remaining chapters do not. Another regrettable condition is the lack of a bibliography. References are practically non-existent, and yet there is a wealth of information presented in this monograph.

The few references that are given are buried in the text, and are often grossly inadequate. For example, early orders containing censorship regulations are identified by number and date, and are quoted, but are they given here completely? Where might they be found if one wanted to see the source documents? Extracts are presented from the "Weekly Reports of the Overseas Mail Branch file 56/76". Where can one find the complete reports? In another example, the authors state "Notes from a visit to the P.O. Archives December 1940" followed by reference to a file. What is the address where these archives are located?

One more point, which may seem quibbling, is the fact that the odd/even page numbers jump back and forth between the left hand and right hand pages. This inconsistency has two causes. In Chapter 1, a page 9a creates the change. In other cases a new chapter begins properly on the right hand page. However, the previous chapter ends with a blank page on the left, which has not been numbered, causing the improper sequence.

Such technical inadequacies lead the reader/researcher to a love-hate relationship with this book. For the moment, my love exceeds my hate by a large margin. In fact, I found the answer to one question the first time I opened the book. I recently purchased a censored first day cover sent from Sweden to the U.S. in 1942. I doubted the dealer's claim that the cover was censored by both British and U.S. examiners, which arose from the fact that two different resealing tapes were used—the usual British P.C. 90 tape on one end, and a brown tape on three sides of the cover with no wording but imprinted with crowns.

Torrance and Morenweiser point out that the British used both tapes, with the three sides being opened in cases where careful inspection was warranted, or when the envelope had a tissue liner. With the above caveats in mind, I heartily recommend this book to anyone interested in British censorship during World War II. □

Iceland and World War II

By Alan Warren

Island postalt set i perioden 1939-1945 by Kristian Hopballe and Ólafur Eliásson, Forlaget 5F, Odense, 1991, 7 by 9½ inches (17.5 x 24 cms), 352 pages, softbound, in Danish. 300 Dkr (approx. \$50) plus shipping from Forlaget 5F, Sandknæsen 51, 5250 Odense SV, Denmark.

The authors have thoroughly researched the history during this interesting period in Iceland's postal service, drawing on records and archives in the administrations of Denmark, Iceland, and the Faroes, as well as various museums, and a dozen specialist collectors of this material.

Rather than using the traditional chronological approach, the authors elected to discuss the changes that occurred during the war years by subject. For example, the first chapter names the ships that carried mail during this period and includes the dates of sailing and ports of call. The chapter itemizing the valid stamps printed during this period provides catalog cross-reference numbers among *AFA*, *Facit*, and *Islensk Frimerki*.

Another chapter is devoted to the postal rates of the time, based on destination and weight for each class of mail. Statistics are even presented for the total number of pieces of mail handled.

Following a discussion of the situation when war broke out, the authors detail the various routes when mail went via England to other countries. The Pan Am Clipper route to the U.S. via Lisbon, the censorship station in Bermuda, and the Onward Air Transmission (O.A.T.) cachet are just a few of the details provided.

Another interesting chapter deals with mail from Denmark to Iceland via Siberia, or Germany, or Lisbon and New York. However, one of the most important services this book provides is the opportunity to see so many censored covers illustrated. There are few pages in this book that do not have a cover to supplement the text, and in most cases they are censored covers.

The chapter on censorship provides a wealth of information on the location of inspection stations, and the various resealing tapes and marks used by the British and German censors. Clues are given to help identify whether censor stations were in Canada, Jamaica, Gibraltar, Bermuda, Bahamas, or Barbados. Another chapter gives the background on the famous "Postbox 506" in Lisbon, and the role that the Red Cross played in handling mail during the war. Separate chapters provide background on the British and American troops stationed in Iceland, and illustrate fieldpost and APO markings. Even V-mail gets a mention.

The quality of mechanical details has not been overlooked. The illustrations throughout are excellent. The detailed table of contents covers four pages, and the subject index distinguishes text from illustration references. The authors' "Afterword" serves one useful purpose in that the publication date is disclosed there. The book is highly recommended for both Iceland collectors as well as censored mail aficionados. The major handicap would be the fact that the book is in the Danish language. However, the multitude of illustrations make this work extremely attractive, and the investment in a dictionary worthwhile. □

Linking Scandinavia and Germany

By Alan Warren

Trelleborg-Sassnitz 1897-1945 by Ingemar Wägerman, SFF Handbook No. 26, 146 pages, 8¼ by 11 inches, illustrated, soft-bound, in Swedish, 1990. Sveriges Filatelistförbund, Box 30232, 10425 Stockholm, Sweden, 105 SKr (approx. \$19). 1990.

Wägerman may be recognized as one of the co-authors of a series of articles on Swedish ship mail that appeared in *Seaposter*, the journal of the Maritime Postmark Society. It seems natural then that he should write about the passage of mail between Sweden and the continent, with particular focus on the ferry from Trelleborg, Sweden, to Sassnitz, Germany. In 1909 the ferry service was converted to a train-ferry, which carried not only mail but also

passengers between Berlin and Oslo, Gothenburg, or Stockholm.

Some lovely old picture postcards show us the various ships of Swedish and German registry that were used for this service. Illustrations also include stationery and advertising cards promoting the ferry. The sea post offices established on board were changed to railway TPOs in 1898. If a stamp was not cancelled at the country of origin, it received a TPO marking.

The author's thoroughness includes discussion of auxiliary markings such as registered mail and postage due. Parcel cards with directional labels receive their own treatment. Other topics briefly covered by the author include postal service during the two world wars, and airlifting of mail when sea ice built up.

The ten types of canceler employed over the years are illustrated with their inclusive dates of use. Although the text is in Swedish, summaries in English and German appear at the end of the book. The table of contents and index seem very thorough. The illustrations are of very good quality. □

Swedish Elegance

By Russell H. Anderson

Images of Sweden - PFA Swedish Stamps by Kim Loughran with design work by Johan Vipper. 1991. Graphics by Typografen 1, Stockholm. Approximately \$91.50 from PFA Swedish Stamps, S-164-88 Kista, Sweden.

Images of Sweden is an extraordinarily elegant small slip-covered production, printed in English. It illustrates both historical and modern Sweden with a terse description of the country's history and modern industrial development. Using illustrations taken from various stamp issues (about half are actual stamps mounted in modern sleeves), it provides the essence of Sweden.

Since it is a limited edition of 10,000 copies, those interested would be well advised to try immediately to obtain a copy before prices escalate. This book will probably become a model for other national publications, although most will not tell the subdued but elegant and prideful story of a modern nation that in many ways leads the world.

Some philatelic productions are pedestrian technical treatises, usually of great research value. Others are merely picture books for the coffee table. This small package is a pleasure to review as a sophisticated semi-philatelic treatise that tells of the essence of the country through its stamps.

It is a great advance on the Greenland and Iceland productions, which are histories of those areas seen through stamps. Both earlier productions are excellent. Apparently the Swedes have learned from them and gone on to provide a very fine short history of their own.

The price is fairly high, 549 krona, partially offset by the inclusion of many stamps that were still in stock, but it is well worth the cost. The reviewer will certainly add other stamps to fill out the illustrations.

It might be an idea for the USPS to study the book, as well as a number of other Swedish productions in philately, to update its materials. □

Collectors' Guide

By Charles J. Peterson

Advanced Stamp Collecting by Barry Krause. 159 pages, 8½ by 11 inches, soft cover, illustrated. Betterway Publications, Inc., White Hall, VA, 1990. ISBN 1-55870-159-1. \$9.95 at retail book stores or from the publishers, P.O. Box 219, Crozet, VA 22932. ▶▶

This is the third "how to" publication by Barry Krause, and it displays some of the same strengths and weaknesses as its predecessors.

The stated audience for this work is the individual who has "already mastered the basics of collecting" and wants to move on to greater heights—specifically, to research, exhibiting and investment/dealing. In actuality, the level and tone of the book appear geared more to adults who are just coming to grips with the hobby. For those readers, and particularly for those who are interested in the financial aspects of stamp collecting, this is a reasonably sound and helpful book, even if it's somewhat superficial.

The first chapter deals with establishing collecting goals. Subsequent chapters treat mailing rates and postal history, rare stamps, "neglected specialties," fakes and frauds, exhibiting, U.S. and foreign dealers, national stamp societies (only those not listed in Krause's earlier *Stamp Collecting*), museums and libraries, shipping stamp collections, finances, photographing stamps, auctions, becoming a stamp dealer, philatelic writing. There's also a short bibliography (selected items not listed in the previous book), an index (done by computer or by someone not very knowledgeable of philately and/or indexing), and ten pages of stamp record forms.

Several chapters are worth attention: there are useful and properly caveated tips on philatelic photography, and the section on philatelic writing is commendable. Other chapters, however, are rudimentary, and suffer from poor structure and skimpiness on the one hand and redundancy on the other. For example: the author's personal investment tips show up on page 15 and again on page 88, and appear as well in various discussions and examples elsewhere in the book; the stamp inventory forms amount to nine and a half pages of wasted space; encased stamps may or may not be the great investment item the author suggests them to be, but considering the amount of text given to them they should certainly have rated an accompanying photo by way of description.

There's also an overriding feeling of discontinuity, as though the author were writing individual stand-alone chapters rather than a coherent book.

In general, illustrations are technically good but not representative and not particularly well placed in relation to the text. Typography, layout and other publishing aspects are very clean and attractive. Further, the author has a good conversational style of writing well suited to this type of publication.

Frankly, all three of Krause's books are rather thin gruel. I'd like to see him pull them all together into one comprehensive work. I think he's capable of it, particularly if he broadens his coverage of mainstream philatelic material. In the meantime, he's provided an inexpensive and reasonably sound—albeit unbalanced—tool for the would-be serious collector. □

►► How to Edit—from page 25.

Scope

Next, the good editor will decide the journal's scope. In some cases it may be self-evident, since the definition of the society will more or less automatically specify the scope of the journal's coverage. Even so, the editor must elevate this aspect so that he or she addresses it deliberately every time.

Why? Because it's important to meet the entire range of society interest, if not in every issue, then at least over a planned rotation. If the scope gets taken for granted, the result is usually neglect of portions that are difficult, and those that are of less interest to the editor. But an editor who is aware of the scope will strive to cover it comprehensively.

There's another reason too. Using the scope as a boundary will provide structure and discipline to a journal. And on those rare occasions when the editor decides to exceed the scope, it will send an instant message to readers—*Pay special attention: this is important*. If the editor gets in the habit of wandering afield, a powerful editorial tool is sacrificed.

Scope is also defined another way, summed up by addressing these questions: Why does this journal exist? What is distinctive about it? (Not its physical appearance, or aspects that are subject to change, but on the most basic level.) What does this journal have in common with others?

Constituency

The editor must be intimately familiar with the member-readers, and must edit to address them. This means going beyond the aspects of mutual interest that define the society, which are treated in the scope of the journal, to consider such things as age, gender, educational level, social group, income, and so forth.

If your membership includes a lot of people whose first language isn't English, minimize the use of slang, idiom, and metaphors drawn from contemporary popular culture. If most are senior citizens, don't use agate type. If most are living on modest fixed incomes, don't fill your journal with material that's more appropriate for *The Philatelic Foundation Quarterly* or *The Collectors Club Philatelist*.

If your readership comprises more than one identifiable constituency, make certain that you serve each one, preferably in every issue, but at least in rotation over a period of time.

Don't overwhelm your readers, and don't bore them. If every stamp and cover you illustrate is a "gee whiz" item that few can aspire to own, readers may be fascinated for a while, but those who are kept in a perpetual state of awe will eventually drop away. If nine tenths of your readers are trying to fill as many spaces as possible in their one-country albums, don't fill nine tenths of your journal with flyspeck studies.

But even as you write for the general membership, which may be experienced and sophisticated in the field, be sensitive to new members, and edit so they can understand too. Few philatelic writers have this sensitivity. It is the editor's job to add the phrases that define in-group terms, and to decode or delete jargon.

For three years I've been a member of the Germany Philatelic Society's Russian Zone Handoverprint Study and Research Group. Its bulletin comes out on schedule, five times a year. I have yet to receive an issue that I can understand, because it's written solely for those who've collected HOPs for years.

Strategy

A good editor will have a long-term plan to achieve his or her editorial goals comprehensively, usually beginning with a list of subjects that must be addressed. The next task is to decide how to approach each individual subject. Some articles should be complete and self-contained. Some subjects can best be treated as regular features, or serial features.

To produce a high-quality product, it helps to stand these points on their heads. In other words, an editor who decides in advance that each issue of the journal must have one or more major, self-contained articles; one or more running features; one or more puzzles or contests; one or more serialized features; a letters column; questions and answers; a calendar; and reviews will be in control of the journal in a way that an editor who takes what comes in or assigns only by subject won't be.

Beyond that, if these different elements are regarded as essential,

the editor will be aware immediately of structural weaknesses that should be addressed, and will seek appropriate writers and make assignments accordingly. A surprising number of otherwise skillful editors function without a strategy, and thus are servants to the copy they and others submit, rather than masters of it.

Focus

Each issue should have a principal focus, and the regular writers should be encouraged to support it. In this way, the whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts.

I write a column on United States Stamps for *The American Philatelist*. Recently Bill Welch notified me that the APS Fakes and Forgeries Committee is preparing a "theme" issue, and asked that I be prepared to devote my column to U.S. fakes and forgeries when that issue rolls around.

When you decide to focus on an exceptionally important subject, notify all your readers in advance, so that everyone has an opportunity to submit something for your consideration. Beyond that, share with readers the subjects you're thinking about, so that you generate a flow. Sometimes you won't see the importance of a particular area until you have an article in hand, at which point you may decide to seek companion material to provide focus.

Membership Service

Report on the meetings and events of the society, and future plans. Include reports from your society's main officers. Give recognition for achievements. Sometimes this means scouring the show reports in *Linn's* or *Stamp Collector* to learn which of your members earned a bronze medal at a national stamp show, but it's more than that. *Precancel Forum* regularly reports on the collecting achievements of its most advanced members—how close each one is to having a complete collection of Bureau precancels, or who has the largest number of towns and types.

Serve as a clearing house for members, so they can buy, sell, and trade with other members. Offer free or cheap classified ads. Hold membership auctions as a regular feature. Publish a membership roster. Conduct occasional membership polls, and plan future issues based on their results. Invite dealers to advertise as a service to members, but never allow them to block member-to-member contacts and transactions.

Membership Involvement

Identify your writers, and always be striving to develop new ones. Every time you learn of someone whose area of expertise hasn't been explored previously or fully in your journal, solicit an article on the subject.

When someone begs off with the excuse, "I can't write," don't take no for an answer. Offer to assist. Furnish the prospect with guides for writers. Here are a few you should look over and be prepared to share with novices (and sometimes with experienced writers too):

"Philatelic Authorship," a Bureau Issues Association Staff Monograph, *The Bureau Specialist*, July 1965, pages 233 to 235.

"You, Too, Can Write Up a Philatelic Research Project," by R. T. Murphy, *The American Philatelist*, July 1980, pages 627 to 630.

"The How To's of Philatelic Research," by William H. Bennett, *The American Philatelist*, November 1982, pages 1017 to 1024.

"Preparing a Manuscript for the *German Postal Specialist*" and "Style Guide for the *German Postal Specialist*," *German Postal Specialist*, August 1986, pages 327 to 330.

"Some Tips for Philatelic Writer and Editor," distributed by Barbara Mueller at the WU30 writers seminar at Ameripex.

"Guidelines for Writers, A guide to submitting manuscripts to *Linn's*

Stamp News," available free from Linn's, P.O. Box 29, Sidney, OH 45365. (Include a stamped number 10 return envelope.)

Publish every letter you have space for, whether or not each one contributes to the group's collective wisdom. The point is to set an example that you desire writing from members, and that you value every submission. When it comes to articles, set high standards; with letters, relax them. Promptly acknowledge every submission—article or letter—at least with a postcard to the author.

If a letter has real meat, consider using it as an article, or asking the writer to restructure or expand it into an article. But likewise consider scaling a manuscript down to a letter if it doesn't seem to warrant full treatment but has useful points.

Invite suggestions, and especially criticism. When you get it, give each suggestion and criticism fair consideration, even if you eventually determine not to accept it. When someone says, "I'll cancel or quit if you don't stop xyz," offer a dues or subscription refund immediately. If you ever permit such tyranny to bully you, you're doomed. But to those who say, "I'll cancel or quit if you don't start publishing xyz," bend over backwards to do it. You'll be expanding your scope.

Seek a diversity of views, not a consensus. Consensus building may be important to sustain a robust organization, but that is the task of other officers, not of the editor.

Tone will vary considerably from one publication to the next, from one society to the next, and often according to the editor's taste. How much controversy is acceptable is culturally determined, but, as a general rule, strong expressions of opposing viewpoints build and sustain greater interest and reader loyalty than party-line sameness.

Style

Develop a style and stick to it. Style means consistency, not rigidity. I recommend beginning with a standard style sheet, such as the Associated Press booklet, but you'll still have to develop conventions to address your special needs.

In this journal, for example, we write 8½ by 11 inches, not 8½" x 11"; First Quarter, not first quarter, not 1st Q; WU30, not WU#30, not WU 30; pages, not pp.; catalog, not catalogue; percent, not per cent, not %; and so forth, except in direct quotations. We spell out simple fractions and whole numbers one through ten in running text, but not in block copy; we use digits for compound numbers and numbers higher than ten. In running text, we use "to" rather than an en dash to indicate duration [November 1 to 14]; but in the calendar we do the opposite [November 1-14].

These conventions have evolved over time, some of them not until this issue, but once adopted, we adhere to them unless some new reason or problem causes us to change.

In this computer age, some editors ask authors who submit copy on disk to conform to the journal's style. In that case, it is necessary to supply authors with a style sheet. *The American Revenuer* has the most comprehensive one I've seen, *A Style Guide for use by the authors and editors*, available from Kenneth Trettin, editor, Rockford, IA 50468-0056.

If your field is highly technical or complex, requiring the frequent use of abbreviations and specialized terms, I recommend you consult *The Manuscript Society Criteria for Describing Manuscripts and Documents*. Single copies are free from David R. Smith, Executive Director, The Manuscript Society, 350 N. Niagara St., Burbank, CA 91505.

If you have access to typesetting, rather than just typewriter type, learn the proper use of punctuation that isn't in the high-school

►►

grammar guides, mainly the bullet, and the distinctions between a hyphen, en dash (the width of a capital N), em dash (the width of a capital M), and three-em dash. It surprises me how often these are improperly used in otherwise well-crafted journals.

A typical mistake is to use an em dash where a hyphen or an en dash (virtually identical in appearance) belongs, but *The Philatelic Exhibitor* frequently does the opposite, using en dashes where em dashes should be. This tends to jar the reader, because it undermines the emphatic purpose of dashes.

Learn to use an ellipsis properly. It consists of *three spaced periods*. If it follows a complete sentence, that makes four dots, but the first is an actual functioning period, not a part of the ellipsis, and therefore is not preceded by a space.

Choose and use a terminal punctuation device. That eliminates all ambiguity as to where an article, letter, or notice ends. In this quarterly we use a hollow square bullet, but almost any graphic symbol or rule that doesn't serve some other purpose will work.

"Style," in the context discussed above, refers to format and technique, for which you apply and devise rules. It does not refer to writing style. It is unfortunate that the term has a double meaning to editors, because the last thing we want to promote is uniformity of writing style. To the contrary, a good editor offers encouragement to every writers' individuality. But not every expert philatelist is a practiced writer, grammarian, and stylist. For those who aren't, the editor's job is to supply every necessary assistance, which in practice means making a lot of textual adjustments.

Aside from the usual laundry list—avoid cuteness and clichés, prefer the active voice, choose simpler terms over awkward ones, and so forth—the main editorial job is to achieve clarity and to eliminate ambiguity. If you don't understand exactly what a writer means, don't publish his or her article.

Check Facts

Don't assume that your writers are infallible. Make it a practice to look up everything you can in any article, such as catalog numbers, names and spellings, historical dates, and other easily verifiable assertions. If they check out, you know you have a conscientious writer. In that case, you may have legitimate grounds to trust the facts you don't know and can't easily check.

Even then, if a statement seems unusual or doubtful, ask the author for documentation, and when you receive it, attribute it in the text.

If the easily checked facts are wrong, be wary of everything that author submits, and require documentation for everything, or else reject that person's submissions. It is well worth spending a lot of effort to rewrite a competent but poorly written manuscript on a subject of importance. But publishing an erudite essay that's full of mistakes will prove to be a lingering liability. If you don't have the knowledge yourself to evaluate a manuscript, send it to another expert for an opinion.

Attribution

All creative work and original research by others must be acknowledged and fully referenced; anything short of that is plagiarism. But information that is commonly known among experts in any field may be presented as fact, if it is fact, or consensus if it reflects prevailing opinion.

Beyond that, styles will vary, with those who have a scholarly bent preferring to see every assertion footnoted, and others being satisfied with a bibliography, for major works of research or compilation. The important thing in these cases is to make sure that the attribution is functional—that is, that someone who wants to find a

source for a particular point can locate it easily, without having to read an entire library.

For columns and more ephemeral writing, textual attribution should be adequate, and is kinder to the general reader.

Proof Read

Stamp journals have more typographical errors today than ever before. Frequently whole blocks of text are lost, or duplicated, or read like gibberish. That's a consequence of editors' reliance on computer spelling checkers. They are no substitute for live human proofreaders.

The least capable proofreader is the person who is most familiar with the copy, because that person glides through, seeing what he or she "knows" is there rather than what actually is on the paper. The proofreader should be someone who hasn't read the copy previously, which eliminates the author, the editor, and the typesetter.

However, the editor should read the proof for clarity, context, and appearance. If major changes have been made in editing, the author should read the edited version to make sure the editing has not inadvertently introduced factual error, or distorted an opinion.

Conclusion

The approach to editing a society journal outlined here is my own. It won't work for everyone, and it might not work for anyone else. Nevertheless, I'm confident that if you give careful consideration to each of these points, you'll be rewarded, whether or not you decide to adopt them.

For most philatelic editors, that's just the beginning. After editing comes typesetting, photography, layout, production, and mailing, and often these tasks are also assigned to the editor. If they are poorly done, excellence during the editing stage won't rescue the journal from disgrace. That is to say, editing is important, but it isn't everything, in producing a quality journal for a philatelic society. □

►►Editing— from page 25.

in my association with a dozen or so philatelic handbooks. If you accept that as a central premise, as I do, then a number of other points follow.

The first job of the editor is to attract authors. The role of the editor is not to write the journal; it's to present the contributions of others. I can appreciate the difficulties involved in getting members to write; I empathize with the frustrated editor trying to scrape together enough material for yet another issue of the publication; I've been there myself. But this should only be accepted as a temporary situation, and there are definite steps which that editor can take to change things.

To start with, our beleaguered editor needs to analyze the organization's scope, and break it out into individual areas and sub-areas. Then, examine what's been covered in past issues of the journal and what's been neglected, to form a want list of subjects to be covered. Should there be better treatment of post-war definitives? Re-examination of certain classic issues? Recapitulation of forgeries? Postal stationery? Depression-period material? Certain areas of postal history?

If the focus is thematic, what about meters or foreign cancellations or revenues? Is there a regular feature on articles in other journals? How about book reports, including coverage of related U.S. government publications? Does the field need a bibliography? Are there write-ups of member participation in exhibitions? Are auction results listed? Are there any philatelic anniversaries coming up that call for concentrated coverage?

Next, the prospective articles and columns are matched with names. Specific people should be asked to write about specific subjects. Members who might never volunteer may be very responsive if asked to prepare something on a topic dear to their hearts, and it's a rare collector who won't comply with a request for an article on a pet cover. Many members who are shy about submitting original contributions will be glad to compile sales results, price trends, gleanings from other publications.

This approach won't bring overnight success; at a rough estimate, it will take a year before the editor has a full pipeline of material coming in. It's also not a one-time effort. There'll be a small number of outright refusals, a somewhat larger number of tentatives that never come through, and a lot of correspondence with those who do finally provide an article. Then there's always the next issue and the next year to plan for. Ideally, as one issue goes to the printer there's enough material on hand to make up the next issue—and a year's worth of projected articles out there somewhere.

All these new authors will need help in presenting their material; and that brings us to the next point.

The editor is always working on behalf of someone else. First and foremost, it's the society or the publisher or the board of directors or whoever hires or appoints. While these folks may appear to treat the editor with benign neglect, that doesn't mean the editor is an autonomous entity. Editing involves a commitment to advance the aims and philosophies of the sponsors, and—like it or not—there's no way in which the editor can disavow the role of public representative and agent of the organization.

There's also a direct responsibility to the authors/contributors. That means encouraging them and making appropriate suggestions regarding subject, focus, possible examples; the less experienced the author, the more non-coercive guidance will probably be called for. The goal is to enable the author to produce a well-written, interesting and useful piece of writing.

There are few authors whose work is fault-free, whether that involves major difficulties with syntax or accidental typos or punctuation errors. Corrections need to be dealt with in a positive, helpful manner. Minor errors should be fixed without fanfare. If major changes are needed, the proposed revisions should go back to the author for review, especially where personal style or questions of fact are involved.

What should be done with authors who insist that not a word be changed and not a punctuation mark revised? Fortunately, in all my years of editing I've never run into any of those near-legendary creatures, but I know they exist. My response would be to refuse to accept the material for publication. It may be a fine article which in truth needs no corrections or clarifications—but acceptance under those terms would violate the editor's primary responsibility to the society.

Finally, the best editing is anonymous. That doesn't imply the editor's name isn't prominently listed in the journal. Rather, it means that the individual contributions reflect their authors, and the journal reflects the society. The publication should not come across as the one-person show of the editor.

There's a well-worn joke about the tailor who mis-cut a suit, but persuaded his customer that it really did fit. All the customer had to do was bend one arm outward to take up the slack in the sleeve, lean forward to smooth out the bulge in the back, take short steps with the right foot and long steps with the left, turn his head at a 30-degree angle to the left, etc. Observing him walking home in his new apparel, a lady commented to her friend, "Oh, the poor man! But doesn't he have a marvelous tailor!"

It's the editor's job to make the author and the journal look good. If that's done properly, the editor is virtually invisible to the public outside of a well-defined editorial column. If it's done incorrectly, the readers will constantly have their attention drawn to "the marvelous editor" to the detriment of the journal and the society. "The book belongs to the author," was Max Perkins' editorial credo, a philosophy which can be translated without damage to the world of journals.

Editing is a unique and necessary function. Technical skill is important to the editor, but a central philosophy is even more so. I suggest that what has worked for me—which I've tried to encapsulate in this article—will be helpful for others as well. □

►► Secretary-Treasurer—from page 44. ▼

Membership Profile

The present membership of WU30 resides in these states or countries:

Alabama	1	New Jersey	9
Arizona	3	New Mexico	3
California	34	New York	12
Colorado	5	North Carolina	2
Connecticut	8	Ohio	22
Delaware	1	Oklahoma	1
District of Columbia	3	Oregon	11
Florida	17	Pennsylvania	8
Georgia	1	Rhode Island	2
Illinois	10	South Carolina	1
Indiana	4	Tennessee	4
Iowa	2	Texas	10
Kansas	2	Virginia	13
Kentucky	4	Washington	4
Louisiana	1	Wisconsin	10
Maine	1	Australia	1
Maryland	12	Canada	16
Massachusetts	2	Cyprus	1
Michigan	8	Germany	3
Minnesota	6	Great Britain	5
Mississippi	1	Guatemala	1
Missouri	1	India	1
Montana	1	Mexico	1
Nevada	2	Netherlands	1
New Hampshire	1	Sweden	2
Switzerland	2		

George Griffenhagen, Secretary-Treasurer, WU30
2501 Drexel Street
Vienna, VA 22180

The Last Words

By Joe F. Frye

As usual, this little blurb is literally "last," being the last thing keyboarded each issue.

Believe it or not—Epson America finally called me March 11, 1992, about the long-dead GQ-3500 laser printer! More next issue.

This issue required 10 hours and 8 minutes' keyboarding time, including importing files from diskettes accompanying articles (thank you all for this help).

An extra hundred copies will be produced for distribution at World Columbian Stamp Expo and other events with WU30 participation.

If you don't want to write letters to me, you can write to anyone you know who might be interested in our journal and services. Encourage your friends to join WU30.

They will thank you for it, and so will all the members.

Your letters, suggestions, and criticisms are welcome. □

TO: Editor American Philatelist
P. O. Box 8000
State College PA 16803-8000

Secretary-Treasurer's Report—as of March 8, 1992.

We welcome new members joining since Jan. 5, 1992 report:

1614 Mike Milam, P.O. Box 100644, Denver, CO 80250.
Assistant editor, *The Philatelic Exhibitor*. Sponsor: C. J. Peterson.

1615 William P. Wergin, 10108 Towhee Ave., Adelphia, MD 20783. Author of articles on microscopes and African Americans on postage stamps. Sponsor: Richard Thomas.

Reinstatements—Thanks to the efforts of WU30 president C. J. Peterson, we are pleased to report the reinstatements of:

0520 Wallace A. Craig, P.O. Box 3391, Fullerton, CA 92634.

0855 Virginia L. (Gini) Nelson, 2224 Hazel Dell Road, Springfield, IL 62703-5236.

1308 Clarence Brew, 2333 Rodney Circle, Reno, NV 89509.

1490 R. W. Everett Jr., 6511 General Diaz, New Orleans, LA 70124.

Contributions

We thank 1447 Diane Boehret of Virginia Beach, VA for her contribution to WU30.

Memberships Cancelled: Members dropped for non-payment of dues. Please let me know if you have an address for these so another dues notice can be sent. A letter from you to any of them encouraging them to reinstate will be appreciated. If they reinstate by July 1, 1992, a copy of this issue of *The Philatelic Communicator* will be sent them without extra cost.

0042 C. C. Cratsenberg, 9928 Lancaster Dr., Sun City AZ 85351-2831.

0208 Creighton Hart, 7922 Bristol Ct., Shawnee Mission, KS 66208.

0552 Arthur Warmesley, 33 Riverview St., Portland, CT 06480-1926.

0648 H. J. Schlueter, P.O. Box 75281, Los Angeles, CA 90075.

0799 Henry Gobie, P.O. Box 21, Cypress Gardens, FL 33884.

0802 Carl Kane, 5855 N. Kolb Rd., Tucson, AZ 85715-0992.

1020 William York, 7 W. 14th St. #7R-S, New York, NY 10011.

1035 Harvey Wolinetz, 14 Cloverdale Ln, Monsey, NY 10952-2401.

1329 Rob Cuscaden, 127 Anderson Blvd., Geneva, IL 60134.

1382 Carlos Swanson, P.O. Box 370, Bryn Mawr, CA 92318-0370.

1409 Ranes Chakravorty, 5049 Cherokee Hills, Salem, VA 24153.

1421 Robert Yost, 1300 Crescent Dr., Elizabeth City, NC 27909.

1426 Madhukar Jhingan, 18 School Lane, New Delhi 110001, India.

1466 Laurence Benson, 1832 Jean Ave., Tallahassee, FL 32308.

1495 A. W. Starkweather, P.O. Box 45, Hornell, NY 14843.

1498 T. E. Gift, 1959 Haviland Ave., Bronx, NY 10472-5103.

1514 S. A. Church, 1111 Ash #902, Denver, CO 80220.

1550 J. LaPorta, P.O. Box 2286, La Grange, IL 60525-8386.

1578 Guy Dillaway, P.O. Box 181, Weston, MA 02193.

1580 G. M. Purington, 1996 Spruce Dr., Columbus, OH 43217.

1584 J. Steinberg, P.O. Box 6647, Fresh Meadows, NY 11365-6647.

1587 Gerald E. Gray, 2201 Wayne St., Copperas Cove, TX 76522.

1592 R. Turnelle, 8 Birch St., Waterville, ME 04901.

1594 I. J. Kuzych, 7758 Condor Ct., Alexandria, VA 22306.

1597 C. W. Dean, P.O. Box 24118, Lexington, KY 40524.

▶▶ Column 2.

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Please Help Us Keep Your Mailing Address Current

Please notify me as soon as you have an address change, to assure you will receive each issue of *The Philatelic Communicator*.

Don't miss the Membership Profile later in this report.

▶▶ Page 43, Column 2.